Press Release

The Cleveland Museum of Art

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GREAT WORKS IN CMA COLLECTION REPRESENT ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CULTURES

CLEVELAND — Many visitors to **Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur** at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA, Feb. 20–Apr. 23, 2000) might want to compare these 4,500-year-old objects to sculptures and other works of art from nearby places. Just upstairs from the special exhibition, CMA's permanent display of ancient art includes numerous examples (in galleries 201 and 202) whose Near Eastern origins, like Ur in Sumer, may bring to mind great ancient cities and peoples that played roles in Judeo-Christian scriptures:

- Standing sentinel at the doorway to the ancient galleries are two stone figures: a granodiorite statue of the devout ruler *Gudea* — builder of at least 15 temples in the Sumerian city of Lagash — one of the finest and largest known statues of this man (about 2150 BC); and a unique basalt statue of a *Hittite Priest-King or God* from a part of present-day Syria conquered by the Hittites around the time it was carved (about 1600 BC).
- CMA's marble *Stargazer Statuette* was created about the same time as the works in the traveling show. This exquisite statue is an idol in abstract female form from Anatolia (in what is now southeast Turkey) and is the earliest human figure in CMA's collection.
- A monumental alabaster relief from the historic "palace without rival" in Nimrud (883–859 BC, present-day Iraq) was once brightly painted; it depicts a *Winged Genie Pollinating Date Palm*, a god the Assyrians incorporated from Babylonian religion.
- Most closely related in time and scale to the treasures from Ur is a tiny Sumerian *Cup with Procession of Bulls* (about 3100–2900 BC) and a *Recumbent Bull* (about 2700 BC), both carved of limestone or gypsum.
- Among other related works in the room is a *Beaker with Lions and Cocks* (from Marlik, now northwest Iran, about 1000 BC) made from a single sheet of gold that was raised into a vessel shape and decorated with repoussé, engraving, and hammered relief.

(over ...)

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Other antiquities galleries include Greco-Roman art (galleries 208–209) and the recently reinstalled Egyptian galleries (203–205). The museum's *Sight & Sound* audio tour includes messages about nearly 30 works in these ancient galleries. It is available at the ticket center for $4.

These objects are part of CMA's collection of nearly 40,000 works of art spanning five millennia. Admission to the museum is always free. For more information, call **1-888-CMA-0033** or visit **www.clemusart.com**.

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Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur is organized by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The exhibition is sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The Cleveland showing is supported by The Hershey Foundation, The John C. and Sally S. Morley Family Foundation, and Kohrman Jackson & Krantz. Promotional support for the exhibition is provided by *Avenues Magazine* and WCLV 95/5.

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